The city of Cambridge received its royal charter in 1201, having already been home to Britons, Romans and Anglo-Saxons for many centuries. Cambridge University was founded soon afterwards and celebrated its octocentenary in 2009. This series explores the history and influence of Cambridge as a centre of science, learning, and discovery, its contributions to national and global politics and culture, and its inevitable controversies and scandals.

College Life

These 'letters to an undergraduate' were published in 1845, two years after the death of their author, Thomas Whytehead (1815–43). His outstanding student career at Cambridge suggested that he would remain in academic life, but having been ordained deacon and then priest, he volunteered for missionary work, and in 1841 sailed for the southern hemisphere as chaplain to the newly appointed Bishop Selwyn. He became seriously ill on arrival in Australia, and died in New Zealand the following year. This work was created during Whytehead's time as a curate, and later on his travels: he felt strongly that new undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge should have a spiritual and moral guide to life in college as well as a history of university institutions and customs. The letters cover the collegiate system, discipline, rooms, the chapel and hall, the lecture room and library, and the lasting importance of college friends.
Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library and other partner libraries, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection brings back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.
College Life

Letters to an Under-Graduate

Thomas Whytehead
COLLEGE LIFE.
COLLEGE LIFE.

LETTERS

to

AN UNDER-GRADUATE.

BY THE REV.

THOMAS WHYTEHEAD, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; AND CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF NEW ZEALAND.

CAMBRIDGE:

JOHN THOMAS WALTERS.

LONDON: JAMES BURNS. OXFORD: J. H. PARKER.

M.DCCC.XLV.
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDITOR'S PREFACE</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETTER I</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ORIGIN AND END OF THE COLLEGIATE SYSTEM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETTER II</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE DISCIPLINE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETTER III</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE ROOMS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETTER IV</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE CHAPEL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LETTER V</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE HALL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS.

LETTER VI.
LECTURE ROOM . . . . . . 89

LETTER VII.
THE LIBRARY . . . . 109

LETTER VIII.
COLLEGE FRIENDS . . . . 127
EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THOMAS WHYTEHEAD was born at Thormanby, in the North Riding of the County of York, on St. Andrew's Day 1815, and died in his twenty-eighth year at Waimate, Bay of Islands, New Zealand, on the Third Sunday in Lent, 19th of March 1843. He was the youngest son of the Rev. Henry Robert Whytehead, B.A., and of Hannah Diana, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Bowman, M.A., Rector of Crayke, in the County of Durham, and Prebendary of Lincoln. From the death of his father, which took place in
EDITOR’S PREFACE.

his third year, to his removal to Beverley Grammar School before he had completed his ninth, he remained with three brothers and five sisters under the care of his mother at York; his education meanwhile being conducted by a valued instructress, who had charge of the younger members of the family. At Beverley he continued until the close of the year 1830, first under the Rev. G. P. Richards, M.A., Senior Fellow of King’s College, Cambridge, and afterwards under the Rev. T. S. Warren, M.A. The rest of his preparation for the University was carried on by his brother the Rev. Robert Whytehead. In October 1833, he came into residence as Pensioner at St. John’s College, Cambridge; and took the degrees of B.A. in 1837, and M.A. in 1840. During his academical course he obtained College Prizes for Declamation, Latin Verse, Reading the Lessons in Chapel, and place in the Examination Classes; also the University Honours of the
EDITOR'S PREFACE.

“first” Bell’s Scholarship, the Chancellor’s Medal for English Verse (twice), Sir W. Browne's Medal for Greek and Latin Epigrams, and the Hulsean Prize: he was also second in the first class of the Classical Tripos, and senior Chancellor’s Medallist.

On the 13th of March 1837, he was elected a Foundation Fellow of his College, and in the following year he was appointed Classical Lecturer of Clare Hall. He was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Winchester to the Curacy of Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, at Christmas 1839, and Priest at Christmas 1840. In October 1841, he became Chaplain to the Bishop of New Zealand, with whom he shortly afterwards set sail, and reached Sidney in May 1842. Soon after landing he ruptured a blood-vessel, owing to which he was detained five months in New South Wales. At length, on the 22nd of October, he arrived at New Zealand, where he lingered in a gradual decline until his
EDITOR'S PREFACE.

deat in the following spring. He was borne to the grave, at their own request, by the six students of the Bishop's newly-established College, of which he was the first Principal, and he lies buried at the east end of Waimate Church.

The following work was composed in the early part of the year 1841, while the author was Curate of Freshwater. The subject was one that had been long present to his mind. He had, as he used to say, much enjoyed College himself, and he wished to aid others towards enjoying it also. It was, however, for some time a matter of perplexity to him to determine what would be the most suitable form in which to cast his thoughts. “I think,” he says in a memorandum dated Feb. 6, 1841, “the Student must be written in the form of a dialogue. I cannot tell how else to bring in what I want, and escape difficulties. The present form of College Life is so unlike the idea.” George Herbert’s
EDITOR'S PREFACE. xi

Country Parson next suggested itself as a model, and on its plan he sketched out several chapters. At length he fixed upon the epistolary form. Still he was not satisfied with what he had written; and with these feelings he laid aside the papers for a time, intending to take up and complete them on some future occasion. The subsequent history of the work will best appear from part of a letter which he wrote to the editor from the Waimate, Bay of Islands, New Zealand, March 14, 1848, five days before his decease. After describing the state of weakness to which he was reduced, “I wish earnestly,” he continues, “I could comply with your suggestion and desire of my going on with the ‘Letters to a Student,’ with some alterations of the plan making it more practical. But while I was in Australia, for those three months when I might have completed it, my papers were in New Zealand, and I knew not in which of my
numerous boxes. Arrived at N. Z. I was too much troubled with asthma and lethargy to write. As I recovered from this I took up the translation of the Evening Hymn (four verses for service) into Maori rhyming verse, the first of the kind, of the same metre and rhythm as the English. Two hundred and fifty copies have been printed, and sung in church and school by the natives, and several of them came and sang it under my window. They call it ‘the new hymn of the sick minister.’ Now I found this a harder and longer task than I had anticipated; and I needed the assistance of the experienced Missionaries to correct my use of the particles, in which the natives are very precise, and in many other points, in which my very imperfect knowledge of the language failed me. Bishop Ken’s lines moreover it is very hard for one to compress within the same bounds in a rude language. However it is done, and people seem pleased with it; and it is a comfort to think
EDITOR’S PREFACE.

one has introduced Bishop Ken’s beautiful Hymn into the Maori’s Evening Worship, and left them this legacy when I could do no more for them. One thousand more copies were struck off to-day, for the Southern Congregations. As I said before, I found this a longer task than I thought; need of new corrections kept being discovered; and I found my private reading much given up, and my thoughts too much taken up by my work, pleasant as it was, for one so near the entrance of the shadowy valley as I am. I assure you I felt to breathe quite freely when I had signed the Imprimatur on the last proof copy. Now the same reason makes me unwilling to undertake anything else in the way of composition: moreover I still do not know where the papers lie, and I wish the boxes to remain unopened, tinned as they are, to be sent home at my decease. Will you befriend this parcel of MS. papers? with full permission to burn them, or keep them by you, till you have got
EDITOR’S PREFACE.

your degree, but by no means to meddle with
them before; and then, if you are so disposed,
make use of them towards the composition of
such a volume as you described to me.”

It might perhaps seem from this letter, that
the Editor had only to choose between de-
stroying the papers or completing the Work.
The thought of publishing them as they are
does not appear to have occurred to the Au-
thor. Still no one can doubt that, had it
been proposed to him, his only consideration
would have been whether they were sufficiently
finished to be of use. On this point there can
surely be little question. Besides the very
completeness of the papers, though they want
much of that fulness and finish which they
would have received at the Author’s hands,
had he been spared to accomplish his design,
would have rendered it almost impossible so
to engraft upon them a new work as that
the original materials should be preserved
unouched and distinct. Even in their pre-
EDITOR’S PREFACE.  

sent state, however, they put forward a view of College Life very different from the one ordinarily taken; but it is the only view which will give unity to the several parts of the system. It was a Religious Idea which our Founders sought to express in the Colleges which they founded; and, if we interpret their Institutions on any other assumption, the result can only be an unmeaning confusion.

T. F. K.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
May, 1845.